

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Briefly, the journey of the soul is necessary. The pathway of life is the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment. ~ ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

#1 From the sweet-scented streams of Thine eternity give me to drink, O my God, and of the fruits of the tree of Thy being enable me to taste, O my Hope! From the crystal springs of Thy love suffer me to quaff, O my Glory, and beneath the shadow of Thine everlasting providence let me abide, O my Light! Within the meadows of Thy nearness, before Thy presence, make me able to roam, O my Beloved, and at the right hand of the throne of Thy mercy, seat me, O my Desire! From the fragrant breezes of Thy joy let a breath pass over me, O my Goal, and into the heights of the paradise of Thy reality let me gain admission, O my Adored One! To the melodies of the dove of Thy oneness suffer me to hearken, O Resplendent One, and through the spirit of Thy power and Thy might quicken me, O my Provider! In the spirit of Thy love keep me steadfast, O my Succorer, and in the path of Thy good-pleasure set firm my steps, O my Maker! Within the garden of Thine immortality, before Thy countenance, let me abide for ever, O Thou Who art merciful unto me, and upon the seat of Thy glory stablish me, O Thou Who art my Possessor! To the heaven of Thy loving-kindness lift me up, O my Quickener, and unto the Day-Star of Thy guidance lead me, O Thou my Attractor! Before the revelations of Thine invisible spirit summon me to be present, O Thou Who art my Origin and my Highest Wish, and unto the essence of the fragrance of Thy beauty, which Thou wilt manifest, cause me to return, O Thou Who art my God!

Potent art Thou to do what pleasest Thee. Thou art, verily, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the All-Highest.

~ Bahá'u'lláh

Hinduism

#2 Those who remember me at the time of death will come to me. Do not doubt this. Whatever occupies the mind at the time of death determines the destiny of the dying; always they will tend toward that state of being. Therefore, remember me at all times...

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 8, Verse 5

Judaism

#3 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: How I sent with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, why are you disquieted with me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Psalm 42

Buddhism

#4 Relatives and friends and well-wishers rejoice at the arrival of a man who had been long absent and has returned home safely from afar. Likewise, meritorious deeds will receive the good person upon his arrival in the next world, as relatives welcome a dear one on his return.

Dhammapada, 219–20

Christianity

#5 In this you rejoice even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen Him you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls...

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower fails, but the word

of the Lord endures forever." That word is the good news that was announced to you.

Peter 1:6

Islam

#6 ...My mercy enfolds everything. I shall enjoin it for those who take heed for themselves, who pay the zakat and believe in My signs.

Who follow the messenger, the gentle Prophet, described in the Torah and the Gospel, who bids things noble and forbids things vile, makes lawful what is clean and prohibits what is foul, who relieves them of their burdens, and the yoke that lies upon them.

Those who believe and honor and help Him, and follow the light sent with Him, are those who will attain their goal.

Kitab Al-Kafi 1, IV.13.3 (Hadith)

Bahá'í Faith

#7 Just as the conception of faith hath existed from the beginning that hath no beginning, and will endure till the end that hath no end, in like manner will the true believer eternally live and endure. His spirit will everlastingly circle round the Will of God. He will last as long as God, Himself, will last. He is revealed through the Revelation of God, and is hidden at His bidding. It is evident that the loftiest mansions in the Realm of Immortality have been ordained as the habitation of them that have truly believed in God and in His signs. Death can never invade that holy seat. Thus have We entrusted thee with the signs of thy Lord, that thou mayest persevere in thy love for Him, and be of them that comprehend this truth.

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah / LXXIII

#8 Say, God is my witness! The Promised One Himself hath come down from heaven, seated upon the crimson cloud with the hosts of revelation on His right, and the angels of inspiration on His left, and the Decree hath been fulfilled at the behest of God, the Omnipotent, the Almighty. Thereupon the footsteps of everyone have slipped except such as God hath protected through His tender mercy and numbered with those who have recognized Him

through His Own Self and detached themselves from all that pertaineth to the world.

Hearken thou unto the Words of thy Lord and purify thy heart from every illusion so that the effulgent light of the remembrance of thy Lord may shed its radiance upon it, and it may attain the station of certitude.

Tablets of Baha'u'llah / 12. Tablet to Vafá

#9 The contemplation of the highest minds that have recognized Thy unity failed to attain unto the comprehension of the One Thou hast created through the word of Thy commandment, how much more must it be powerless to soar into the atmosphere of the knowledge of Thine own Being. Every praise which any tongue or pen can recount, every imagination which any heart can devise, is debarred from the station which Thy most exalted Pen hath ordained, how much more must it fall short of the heights which Thou hast Thyself immensely exalted above the conception and the description of any creature. For the attempt of the evanescent to conceive the signs of the Uncreated is as the stirring of the drop before the tumult of Thy billowing oceans. Nay, forbid it, O my God, that I should thus venture to describe Thee, for every similitude and comparison must pertain to what is essentially created by Thee. How can then such similitude and comparison ever befit Thee, or reach up unto Thy Self?

Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah / CXIV

#10 Know thou that, according to what thy Lord, the Lord of all men, hath decreed in His Book, the favors vouchsafed by Him unto mankind have been, and will ever remain, limitless in their range. First and foremost among these favors, which the Almighty hath conferred upon man, is the gift of understanding. His purpose in conferring such a gift is none other except to enable His creature to know and recognize the one true God—exalted be His glory. This gift giveth man the power to discern the truth in all things, leadeth him to that which is right, and helpeth him to discover the secrets of creation. Next in rank, is the power of vision, the chief instrument whereby his understanding can

function. The senses of hearing, of the heart, and the like, are similarly to be reckoned among the gifts with which the human body is endowed. Immeasurably exalted is the Almighty Who hath created these powers, and revealed them in the body of man.

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah / XCV

#11 As to Paradise: It is a reality and there can be no doubt about it, and now in this world it is realized through love of Me and My good-pleasure. Whosoever attaineth unto it God will aid him in this world below, and after death He will enable him to gain admittance into Paradise whose vastness is as that of heaven and earth. Therein the Maids of glory and holiness will wait upon him in the daytime and in the night season, while the day-star of the unfading beauty of his Lord will at all times shed its radiance upon him and he will shine so brightly that no one shall bear to gaze at him. Such is the dispensation of Providence, yet the people are shut out by a grievous veil. Likewise apprehend thou the nature of hell-fire and be of them that truly believe. For every act performed there shall be a recompense, according to the estimate of God, and unto this the very ordinances and prohibitions prescribed by the Almighty amply bear witness. For surely if deeds were not rewarded and yielded no fruit, then the Cause of God—exalted is He—would prove futile. Immeasurably high is He exalted above such blasphemies! However, unto them that are rid of all attachments a deed is, verily, its own reward. Were We to enlarge upon this theme numerous Tablets would need to be written.

Tablets of Baha'u'llah / 12. Tablet to Vafá

#12 ...step into the Valley of Love and be consumed in the fire of love. In this city the heaven of rapture is upraised, and the world-illumining sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is set ablaze; and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Call of the Divine Beloved / The Seven Valleys, 14

#13 Briefly; the journey of the soul is necessary. The pathway of life is the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment. Without training and guidance the soul could never progress beyond the

conditions of its lower nature which is ignorant and defective.

Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace / Talks in Boston and Maiden, 25-29 August 1912*: 97

Personal Prayers

Reflection on the Texts

Discussion

Some questions derived from the readings:

1. In #2 we read, “Whatever occupies the mind at the time of death determines the destiny of the dying.” Can you think of a similar principle stated by Baha'u'llah?
2. According to #3, what is the purpose of suffering?
3. Who inhabit the loftiest Mansions of Heaven?
4. What does the gift of understanding give us? What is meant by the following: “Next in rank, is the power of vision, the chief instrument whereby his understanding can function.”
5. How do we attain Paradise?
6. What one thing “...will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause.”